



State of Louisiana

Department of Environmental Quality

September 11, 2000



M.J. "Mike" Foster
Governor

J. Dale Givens
Secretary

DEQ FORMS COALITION TO AGGRESSIVELY MONITOR AIR QUALITY IN CALCASIEU PARISH

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality is coordinating a major new initiative to measure the ambient air quality in the Lake Charles/Calcasieu Parish area with support from the Lake Area Industry Alliance (LAIA) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The initiative will significantly enhance the existing ambient air monitoring program being conducted by the DEQ. The intent of the initiative is to measure the levels of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's) and dioxins that are present in the area. "Taken together, the results will provide additional information on air quality in Southwest Louisiana," says Bruce Hammatt, DEQ Enforcement Administrator, "and will provide insight into what additional steps, if any, must be taken to protect the health and safety of area residents."

"The residents of Lake Charles, Westlake, Sulphur, Mossville, Vincent Settlement, Moss Bluff, and Carlyss live in a very concentrated industrial area. Citizens in these areas have long been concerned that their health and the health of their families is being compromised by industrial emissions," according to Hammatt. "DEQ is concerned as well. That is why we asked for the cooperation of the EPA and LAIA, a group of 22 industrial companies with operations in the Lake Charles area who have contributed \$1.5 million to the initiative."

"Louisiana's existing ambient air monitoring station in Westlake showed an exceedance of the state's ambient air quality standard for ethylene dichloride (EDC), a toxic substance. The LAIA has voluntarily joined forces with DEQ to more fully explore the extent of air contamination in the Lake Charles area," Hammatt says. In addition, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals and the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry have recently verified elevated levels of blood dioxin in several elderly citizens in the Mossville community.

Four current air-monitoring sites in the area will be modified and enhanced with a new site being established in the Mossville community. Sampling equipment will be installed at each of the five sites to collect ambient air samples to be analyzed for a series of over 100 Volatile Organic Compounds. The sampling method, time and frequency will be based on EPA-approved statistical sampling protocols. The five sites will also be used to collect samples for dioxins/dibenzofurans and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) analyses. Many of these compounds have been shown to cause cancer.

The dioxin sampling will be done for one full year while the enhanced VOC sampling program may continue for up to three years. All validated sampling results will be made immediately available to the general public on a DEQ web site. The enhanced sampling program should be up and running before the end of the calendar year.

"Depending on the sampling results, the DEQ is prepared to take whatever steps necessary to protect the health and safety of the residents of the area," according to Hammatt.

Please note: The following industrial facilities comprise the Lake Area Industry Alliance:

- Air Liquide America Corporation
- Arch Chemicals
- BioLab, Inc
- Certain-Teed Products
- Chemical Waste Management, Inc.
- Citgo Petroleum Corporation
- CMS Trunkline LNG Company
- CONDEA Vista
- Conoco, Inc
- Dynegy
- Entergy Gulf States, Inc
- Equistar Chemicals
- Firestone Polymers
- Georgia Gulf Lake Charles
- Grace Davidson
- Jupiter Chemical Company]
- Louisiana Pigment Company
- Lyondell Chemical Company
- Montell USA Inc
- PPG Industries, Inc
- Reynolds Metals Company
- Westlake Group